

BLADDERPOD

Cleome isomeris Greene

Plant Symbol = CLIS

Contributed by: USDA NRCS California State Office
and Lockeford Plant Materials Center, California



© J.S. Peterson
@ plants.usda.gov

Alternate name

Bladderpod spiderflower

Uses

Wildlife: It serves as a good wildlife plant for upland game, especially quail. It does provide some escape cover and shade for loafing areas and is a source of food. The pea-like seeds are taken readily by a variety of game and song birds.

Ethnobotanical Uses: The Diegueno Indians used the seeds and flowers for food.

Status

Please consult the PLANTS Web site and your State Department of Natural Resources for this plant's current status (e.g. threatened or endangered species, state noxious status, and wetland indicator values).

Description

Caper Family (Capparaceae). Bladderpod is a native, erect, round, shrub four to six feet high and at least as wide. The leaves are alternate and trifoliate. The flowers, which are yellow with six stamens, bloom much of the year and are quite attractive. The seed pods are large, inflated and pendulous with only a few hard, smooth seeds with a prominent end curved.

Distribution

Bladderpod often grows in disturbed areas, and also on coastal bluffs, hills and desert washes. The shrub's native distribution is southern California, Baja California, and Arizona from 200 to 3,000 feet in elevation. For current distribution, please consult the Plant Profile page for this species on the PLANTS Web site.

Adaptation

This native plant is a desert type. In California, it occurs in San Luis Obispo County and in much of lower California, and in the vicinity of Tehachapi, as well as western Fresno and eastern Monterey counties. In the Bakersfield and Tehachapi regions, it can be found to an elevation of 4,000 feet. In cultivated plantings, it has been grown as far north as southern Butte County. It has a wide range of temperature tolerance from below freezing to over 100 degrees F. It is very drought tolerant. Little is known at this time about its adaptation to soils below a pH of 6.

Establishment

The large seed germinates readily. It requires no treatment before planting. It may be direct seeded on a prepared seed bed in the fall to early spring at a rate of one pound of seed per acre. It should be planted no deeper than one inch. Direct seeding becomes progressively less successful as one moves north, because of competition from annual grasses.

For best results with small plantings, the seed should be propagated in flats and the seedlings should be transplanted to gallon cans. Seedlings can be transplanted to the field in either the spring or fall.

Management

This shrub requires good weed control measures, such as hoeing, cultivating, and chemical control during the establishment period. Elimination of all weed competition on the planting site prior to direct seeding is essential for good stand establishment. Normally, the spring rains are sufficient to establish seedlings when directly seeded on deep soils. Potted plants will normally require some summer water depending on the locality.

There is some difference of opinion as to whether bladderpod is susceptible to livestock damage.

Generally, damage occurs only when animals are forced onto it by a lack of preferred feed.

Pests and Potential Problems

This shrub must have good weed control measures such as hoeing, cultivation, or by chemical control.

Seeds and Plant Production

Seed may be collected easily from wild plants by stripping pods from plants and extracting seed. A limited amount of seed is normally available from the California Department of Fish and Game for wildlife plantings. Seed is also available from commercial seed collectors.

Cultivars, Improved, and Selected Materials (and area of origin)

‘Dorado’ Cultivar- Dorado grows naturally on the desert soils and prefers a pH of 6.5 or higher. It is best adapted to the southern part of California up to elevations of 1,220m (4,000 feet), but several successful plantings have been made in the central and northern part of Sacramento Valley.

Dorado has shown excellent performance as a conservation plant on critical areas, upland game cover and food, and for environmental enhancement on deep to moderately deep, medium to finely textured soils that are well-drained.

References

California Department of Fish and Game/US Soil Conservation Service. 1976. ‘*Bladderpod*’ wildlife habitat leaflet no. 2. Compiled by Federal Aid Project W-47-R and Upland Game Investigation.

USDA NRCS. *Notice of Release of ‘Dorado’ Bladderpod*. Davis, California

Mielke, Judy. 1993. *Native plants for southwestern landscapes*. University of Texas Press.

Dole, J.W. and B. Rose. 1996. *Shrubs and trees of the Southern California deserts*. Foot-Loose Press, North Hills, California.

Hinton, L. 1975. Notes on La Huerta Diegueno Ethnobotany. *Journal of California Anthropology* 2:214-222 (p. 217).

Prepared By:

Dave Dyer, USDA NRCS Plant Materials Center, Lockeford, and Reina O’Beck. California State Office, Davis, California.

Species Coordinator:

Dave Dyer, USDA NRCS Plant Materials Center, Lockeford, California.

Edited: 28Mar2005 ro; 23sep05 jsp

For more information about this and other plants, please contact your local NRCS field office or Conservation District, and visit the PLANTS Web site <<http://plants.usda.gov>> or the Plant Materials Program Web site <<http://Plant-Materials.nrcs.usda.gov>>

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA’s TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.